



# *South Carolina Department of Agriculture*

## **Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 22, 2014**

#### **Commissioner Weathers Tours Wateree Farm at SC Department of Corrections Wateree River Correctional Institution**

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers got an inside tour of Wateree Farm in Rembert, SC on Thursday, Dec. 18.

Commissioner Weathers was hosted by SC Department of Corrections (SCDOC) Director Bryan Stirling to see some of the 7,000 acres which includes 1200 dairy cows, row crops, and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF) that can house up to 30 horses while they wait to be adopted. The TRF facility is one of the top in the nation and is one of only 32 in the United States.

The dairy production facility produces enough milk for the 25 SCDOC institutions across the state and even some that SCDOC is able to sell. SCDOC institutions consume 1,473 gallons of milk daily that is farm produced.

“This is a great program in place and one that adds value to our state. These inmates are learning important skills that will later translate into potential jobs in agriculture. What better skills to have than with the #1 industry in the state of South Carolina. I commend SCDOC on these impressive programs and their passion for agriculture,” said Commissioner Weathers.

Director Stirling adds, “It was great to have Commissioner Weathers visit Wateree River CI's dairy and Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation and discuss how our agencies can work together. A partnership with SCDA will better equip inmates with skills and experience so that they can find jobs upon release.”

Wateree Farm is maintained and operated by inmates at Wateree River Correctional Institution.

For more information please contact Meredith Atkinson, Public Information Director, at the above email address and phone number.



**L to R:** SCDA's Assistant Commissioner of External Affairs & Economic Development Clint Leach, SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, SCDOC's TRF Coordinator Lt. Jim Wakeley, Warden, Wateree River CI Donald Beckwith and Regional Director of Operations Gregory Knowlin, outside the TRF Facility.

**L to R:** SCDOC's Assistant Deputy Director of Programs & Services Joel Anderson, Deputy Director of Administration Tom Osmer, Director, SCDOC Bryan Stirling, SCDA's Assistant Commissioner of External Affairs & Economic Development, Clint Leach and SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers discuss the dairy operation at Wateree Farm.



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